

## **Appendix B: Notice of Preparation**

# Notice of Preparation of Environmental Impact Report/Statement

## Department of Water Resources North-of-the-Delta Offstream Storage Investigation

### Introduction

The Department of Water Resources (DWR), as the State lead agency under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), and the Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) as the federal lead agency under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) will prepare an Environmental Impact Report/Statement (EIR/S) for the development of offstream water storage north of the Sacramento/San Joaquin Delta.

The purpose of this notice is to notify the public and agencies that may be involved in approvals or review of the project of the intent to prepare the environmental documentation. DWR and Reclamation are seeking comments on:

- The definition of future conditions without Offstream Storage (No Project/Action Alternative)
- Alternatives to be considered
- Focus of Impact Assessment with respect to potential benefits or impacts
- Issues to be considered in the Cumulative Impact Assessment

The scoping and comment period will conclude on Friday, January 25, 2002. Written comments should be directed to:

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Questions regarding this Notice of Preparation should be directed to Scott Woodland at (916) 651-9278 or emailed to [woodland@water.ca.gov](mailto:woodland@water.ca.gov).

DWR will also accept written and oral comments on the scope and content of the EIR/S at scoping meetings that will be held as follows:

Tuesday, January 8, 2002 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. Bonderson Building Hearing Room 901 P Street Sacramento, California	Wednesday, January 9, 2002 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. Maxwell Inn 81 Oak Street Maxwell, California	Tuesday, January 15, 2002 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. Piccadilly Inn – University 4961 N. Cedar Fresno, California
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At the conclusion of the scoping process, a report will be prepared that will summarize the comments and alternatives to be carried forward. DWR and Reclamation will then begin

the work of preparing the Clean Water Act Section 404(b)(1) alternatives analysis as well as the EIR/S.

## Background

### Sacramento Valley Resources

Roughly three-quarters of California's runoff occurs north of Sacramento, while about the same proportion of urban and agricultural water demand is south of Sacramento. This statewide imbalance in water supply and demand has continually placed pressure on the Sacramento Valley watershed. In addition to providing water for uses south of the region, the Sacramento River and its tributaries also provide water supply within the region for about 2.5 million people and associated industries; irrigation of over 2 million acres of farmland producing rice, grain, fruits, nuts and vegetables; flooding of almost 200,000 acres of permanent and seasonal marsh and agricultural land that serves as waterfowl habitat; and flows to support riverine habitat. The water uses within the region are expected to increase, driven primarily by a projected 2020 population of almost 4 million. Demand for water south of the region will increase similarly due to population growth.

The Sacramento River supports a diverse, complex ecosystem, the largest and most important riverine ecosystem in California. The river is the largest element of the Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta watershed, providing about 80 percent of the inflow to the Delta. Several water development and flood control projects have altered the river's natural flow regime, sediment transport capabilities, and riparian and riverine habitats. A number of species that depend on the riverine ecosystem have been designated as threatened or endangered, including chinook salmon and splittail. Ecosystem and water management priorities associated with the Sacramento River present formidable challenges.

In addition to these challenges, the threat of drought is an ever-present factor in California water management and planning, and the duration of a drought can be difficult to forecast. Droughts in California have run as short as the record-setting dry period from February through June 1997 and as long as the 1987-92 drought. Added to this uncertainty are regulatory decisions to protect water quality and fisheries. Decisions such as the State Water Resources Control Board Order 95-6 adopting an interim water quality control plan for the Bay-Delta, and actions to implement the Central Valley Project Improvement Act have changed water allocations significantly. An improved level of water management is necessary to meet and balance the many competing water needs.

Currently, management of the Sacramento River system between Keswick and the Delta is determined by a combination of hydrology, water use, water resources infrastructure, and local, State, and Federal regulatory and resource agency operational decisions. North-of-the-Delta offstream storage would provide the additional system flexibility needed for balancing ecosystem, environmental, agricultural and municipal and industrial water uses.

### CALFED

The CALFED Bay-Delta Program is a cooperative, interagency effort of more than 20 State and Federal agencies established to develop and implement a long-term comprehensive plan that will restore ecological health and improve water management for beneficial uses of the San Francisco Bay/Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta system and its tributary watersheds. To practicably achieve its program purpose, CALFED agencies will concurrently and comprehensively address problems of the Bay-Delta system within each of four resource categories: ecosystem quality, water quality, water supply reliability, and Delta levee system integrity. Important physical, ecological, and socioeconomic linkages exist between the problems and possible solutions in each of these categories.

The Bay-Delta Program objectives are to provide good water quality for all beneficial uses; improve habitat and ecological function; reduce the mismatch between water supplies and

projected beneficial uses of Bay-Delta water supplies; and reduce risk to land use and economic activities, water supply, infrastructure, and the ecosystem from catastrophic breaching of Delta levees. In July 2000, CALFED agencies completed the Programmatic EIS/R process and filed a Record of Decision (ROD) in August 2000. The Programmatic EIS/R process evaluated a wide range of alternatives. The ROD set forth the Preferred Program Alternative and the strategy for implementing that alternative. The Preferred Program Alternative includes eight program elements: Levee System Integrity, Water Quality, Ecosystem Restoration, Water Use Efficiency, Water Transfer, Watershed, Conveyance, and Storage. Site-specific projects dealing with these elements will be implemented in an integrated and balanced manner.

The storage element of the preferred alternative includes a finding that not only is additional storage needed to meet the needs of a growing population but also, if strategically located, it will provide much-needed flexibility in the system to improve water quality and support fish restoration efforts. Water supply reliability depends on capturing water during peak flows and during wet years, as well as more efficient water use through conservation and recycling. Additionally, groundwater and surface water storage can be used to improve water supply reliability, provide water for the environment at times when it is needed most, provide flows timed to maintain water quality, and protect Delta levees through coordinated operation with existing flood control reservoirs.

The Bay-Delta Program identified actions that will be pursued in Stage 1 to expand storage capacity at existing reservoirs and strategically located offstream sites and to implement a major expansion of more environmentally sensitive groundwater storage. CALFED agencies are committed to increasing storage through the development of acceptable projects. In an October 9, 2001 letter to the Legislature, Governor Davis renewed his commitment to develop reliable and affordable water for California through pursuit of infrastructure projects, including North-of-the-Delta offstream storage. Storage projects are not developed in isolation but rather as part of an overall water management strategy. As such, storage combined with other program actions such as conservation, transfers and habitat restoration will contribute to and be compatible with the water supply reliability, water quality and ecosystem restoration program objectives.

### **Associated Programs**

In addition to the CALFED Stage 1 actions to expand surface and groundwater storage, there are several Northern Sacramento Valley programs under way that are expected to contribute to water supply reliability or habitat restoration. Development and evaluation of alternatives for augmenting storage and system flexibility in the northern Sacramento Valley will consider the potential outcomes and information from the CALFED Integrated Storage Investigations' Groundwater/Conjunctive Use program and Onstream Storage Enlargement (Enlarged Shasta) investigation and from other Sacramento Valley water management programs. Some of the larger programs include:

- Sacramento Valley Water Management Agreement (Phase 8 Bay-Delta Settlement Agreement)
- Sacramento Valley Basinwide Management Plan
- CALFED Ecosystem Restoration Program
- Sacramento River Conservation Area (SB 1086)
- Sacramento / San Joaquin River Comprehensive Study

### **North-of-the-Delta Offstream Storage**

The CALFED ROD specified two actions to be completed before deciding whether to proceed with an offstream storage project north of the Bay-Delta. The first was to create a

partnership with local water interests and the second was to complete environmental review and planning documentation for a reservoir with a capacity of up to 1.9 MAF by August 2004. DWR and Reclamation have completed the first of these directives and are working on the second. In order to comply with all environmental laws (CEQA, NEPA, the Clean Water Act, etc.), DWR and Reclamation will examine a broad range of alternatives in an open, transparent and inclusive process. The investigation will analyze alternatives in terms of how well they meet the objectives described below and their beneficial and adverse impacts.

### ***Memorandum of Understanding***

The directive to create a partnership with local water interests was completed at the end of 2000. The partnership Memorandum of Understanding remains an open document and has been signed by the following entities:

#### ***Federal Partners***

- United States Bureau of Reclamation, Mid-Pacific Region
- United States Fish and Wildlife Service
- Western Area Power Administration

#### ***State Partners***

- California Department of Fish and Game
- California Department of Water Resources

#### ***Local Partners***

- Glenn-Colusa Irrigation District
- Tehama-Colusa Canal Authority
- Orland Unit Water User's Association
- County of Colusa
- Sutter Mutual Water Company
- Reclamation District No. 108
- Princeton-Codora-Glenn Irrigation District
- Provident Irrigation District
- Natomas Mutual Water Company
- Maxwell Irrigation District
- Yolo County Flood Control and Water Conservation District

### ***Project Objectives***

The ROD gives direction on objectives for North-of-the-Delta Offstream Storage:

- Enhance water management flexibility in the Sacramento Valley.
- Reduce water diversion on the Sacramento River during critical fish migration periods.

- Increase reliability of supplies for a significant portion of the Sacramento Valley.
- Provide storage and operational benefits for other CALFED programs including Delta water quality and the Environmental Water Account.

Pursuant to the requirements of CEQA, the EIR/S for North-of-the-Delta Offstream Storage Investigation will consider a reasonable range of potentially feasible alternatives that will support these objectives and foster informed decision making and public participation.

### ***Preparing a Tiered EIR/S based on the CALFED Final Programmatic EIS/EIR***

The process that produced the CALFED Final Programmatic EIS/EIR looked at a broad range of solutions to issues facing the Delta and identified a Preferred Program Alternative. The description is programmatic in nature, intended to help agencies and the public make decisions on the broad methods to meet program purposes. Actions described in the Preferred Program Alternative are intended to take place in an integrated framework and not independently of one another. All aspects of the CALFED Program are interrelated and interdependent. Ecosystem restoration depends on water supply; water supply depends on water use efficiency and consistency in regulation; water quality depends on improved conveyance, Delta levee stability and healthy watersheds; the success of all these elements depends on expanded and more strategically managed storage.

The Preferred Program Alternative is not intended to define the site-specific actions that will ultimately be implemented. For actions contained within the Preferred Program Alternative that are undertaken by a CALFED Agency or funded with money designated for meeting CALFED purposes, environmental review will tier from the PEIS/PEIR. The tiering presumes the balanced implementation of all elements of the Preferred Program Alternative.

Whenever a broad environmental impact analysis has been prepared and a subsequent narrower analysis is then prepared on an action included within the entire program or policy, the subsequent analysis need only summarize the issues discussed in the broader analysis and incorporate discussions from the broader analysis by reference; this is known as tiering. Tiered documents focus on issues specific to the subsequent action and rely on the analysis of issues already decided in the broader programmatic review. Absent new information or substantially changed circumstances, documents tiering from the CALFED PEIS/PEIR will not revisit the alternatives that were considered alongside CALFED's Preferred Program Alternative nor will they revisit alternatives that were rejected during CALFED's alternative development process.

Since this EIR/S will be tiered from the CALFED Programmatic EIS/EIR, the scope of alternatives will be limited to issues directly associated with water storage located north of the Delta.

### ***Project Location***

DWR proposes to evaluate offstream storage in the northern Sacramento Valley.

### ***Possible Project Alternatives***

The following possible alternatives for this program have been identified and will be included in the alternative analysis along with other alternatives developed during the scoping process. The alternatives evaluated in the EIR/S will include consideration of CALFED Stage 1 actions as defined in the ROD.

- ***No Project (Present Condition)***  
This alternative would be defined as present conditions when the Notice of Preparation/Notice of Intent is filed, without North-of-the-Delta Offstream Storage.

- **No Action (Future Condition)**

The No Action Alternative is a description of the anticipated physical, project operation, and regulatory features that would be in place in 2020 without North-of-the-Delta Offstream Storage

- **Sites Reservoir Alternative**

This alternative would develop an offstream reservoir with a capacity of up to 1.9 million acre-feet in size approximately 10 miles west of Maxwell. The reservoir would inundate the community of Sites and most of Antelope Valley. The main dams would be constructed on Funks Creek and on Stone Corral Creek. Up to nine saddle dams would be needed. A sub-alternative will be considered that integrates and expands conjunctive use with operation of a Sites Reservoir. This sub-alternative would operate the offstream storage reservoir to optimize conjunctive use operations in the Sacramento Valley.

Source and conveyance options for this reservoir include:

1. The use of the Glenn-Colusa Irrigation District Diversion and Canal, either in its current capacity or in an enlarged capacity.
2. The use of the Tehama-Colusa Diversion and Canal in its current capacity or enlarged.
3. A new diversion and conveyance facility from the Sacramento River near Moulton Weir.
4. A new diversion and conveyance facility from the Colusa Basin Drain.
5. Diversion and conveyance from East Park Reservoir and/or Stony Gorge Reservoir.
6. A combination of these options.

New or existing delivery facilities from the reservoir may be used, depending on the beneficial uses served.

- **Newville Reservoir Alternative**

This alternative would develop an offstream reservoir with capacity between 1.9 and 3.0 million acre-feet approximately 18 miles west of the City of Orland. A single earth embankment dam on North Fork Stony Creek along with various saddle dams would create the impoundment area. A sub-alternative will be considered that integrates and expands conjunctive use with operation of a Newville Reservoir. Since North Fork Stony Creek is a relatively small drainage area, diversion and conveyance facilities would be needed. The following options are being considered.

1. Stony Creek Diversion which would move water from Black Butte Lake to the Reservoir by canal via a proposed Tehenn Reservoir. Tehenn Reservoir would serve as a forebay/afterbay to the Newville Reservoir.
2. A direct canal from Black Butte Reservoir to Newville to avoid an historical cemetery.
3. A diversion from nearby Thomes Creek which has an annual runoff of approximately 200 TAF. This diversion would require a small dam and a pipeline over a ridge that separates the creek from Newville Reservoir.
4. Diversion and conveyance facility from the Sacramento River.
5. A combination of the above options.

New or existing delivery facilities from the reservoir may be used, depending on the beneficial uses served.

- **Other Possible Alternatives**

As stated earlier, storage projects are not to be developed in isolation but rather as part of an overall water management strategy. Thus, this EIR/S will evaluate whether other possible alternatives meet North of Delta Offstream Storage objectives. Two possible alternatives include the conjunctive use and enlarged Shasta programs mentioned above in the *Associated Programs* section. These could be evaluated as stand-alone alternatives or as sub-alternatives operated in conjunction with North-of-the-Delta Offstream Storage to optimize system flexibility and efficiency.

These and other possible alternatives will be considered and developed through comments received during the Scoping Process. During scoping, DWR and USBR will be seeking input about possible methods for evaluating conjunctive water management that will meet CALFED criteria for local management of conjunctive use projects.

## **Potential Environmental Effects**

DWR began the North-of-the-Delta Offstream Storage Investigation in late 1997 as a two-year reconnaissance-level study authorized by Proposition 204, the Safe, Clean, Reliable Water Supply Act, approved by voters in 1996. In 1999, CALFED consolidated all storage investigations under a comprehensive program called the Integrated Storage Investigations. The North-of-the-Delta Offstream Storage Investigation was incorporated into one of seven ISI program elements and continues engineering, economic, and environmental impact analyses.

Initial evaluation and scoping have identified potential environmental impacts related to facilities associated with the proposed project alternatives. The EIR/S will specifically identify the benefits and impacts and determine the significance of these impacts as well as other potential environmental effects identified during public scoping. Where impacts cannot be avoided by redesign or reformulation the EIR/S will identify potential avoidance measures and mitigation projects designed to reduce significant project related impacts to less than significant levels, wherever possible.

**Table of Potential Impacts**

	<b>Facilities</b>			
<b>Environmental Effect</b>	<b>Surface Storage</b>	<b>Diversions</b>	<b>Conveyance</b>	<b>Groundwater Storage</b>
Land Use Planning	✓	✓	✓	✓
Geology and Soils	✓	✓	✓	✓
Geomorphology	✓	✓	✓	✓
Air Quality	✓	✓	✓	✓
Hydrology and Water Quality	✓	✓	✓	✓
Transportation and Traffic	✓	✓	✓	
Biological Resources	✓	✓	✓	✓
Energy and Mineral Resources	✓	✓	✓	✓
Noise	✓	✓	✓	✓
Utilities and Service Systems	✓	✓	✓	✓
Aesthetics	✓	✓	✓	✓
Cultural Resources	✓	✓	✓	✓
Indian Trust Assets	✓	✓	✓	✓
Recreation	✓	✓	✓	
Hazards and Hazardous Materials	✓	✓	✓	✓
Public Service	✓	✓	✓	✓
Environmental Justice	✓	✓	✓	✓
Mandatory Findings of Significance	✓	✓	✓	✓